

## COVID stats under wraps at Rider

By Stephen Neukam

**R**IDER has continued to withhold key information about COVID-19 on its campus, cloaking the situation in uncertainty, at a time when universities around the country have seen major spikes in coronavirus cases wreak havoc on their students and communities.

After Rider reported a new student case on Tuesday — its 10th confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 since March, a top university official said she did not know whether the student, who lives off-campus, had been on campus, just one day after in-person classes started for the fall semester.

For the five Rider student and employee cases that have been confirmed since August, in each instance school officials reported the university does not know if any of the individuals had been on campus at all.

For two consecutive weeks, the university has refused to disclose how many tests, if any, it has administered, or the number of students in quarantine, crucial statistics in understanding the safety of its classrooms, residence halls and campus facilities.

Rider Student Body President and senior musical theater major Dylan Erdelyi said he wanted the university to be more forthcoming with its coronavirus statistics.

“The campus community deserves to know data such as the number of students tested, because the number of active cases is only meaningful in context,” said Erdelyi. “I have heard from several students that are pleased to see Rider’s case number so low, but skeptical as to if that is an accurate figure, since they are lacking the context of the data. I have seen several schools that are now publishing all coronavirus-related statistics in real-time on their website, including the number of students tested and cumulative

cases vs. active cases; I would certainly like to see Rider move in that direction.”

Associate Vice President of University Market and Communications Kristine Brown declined to reveal how many students are currently quarantined on the Lawrenceville campus and how many students have been tested by the university’s Health Center. The only data the school has presented is the total number of confirmed cases connected to Rider since March.

In contrast, Princeton University, a nearby private institution of higher education, publicly reports total testing statistics for both students and employees, as well as quarantine data on its website. Monmouth University, another private institution in New Jersey, provides daily updates on the number of students in isolation and quarantine — both on and off-campus — on its digital “Covid-19 Campus Dashboard.” The College of New Jersey is reporting its information in a similar fashion.

However, Brown claimed that disclosing the number of students in quarantine would be “misleading” because of the various reasons for enforcing the policy. For example, a student could be quarantined for traveling home to a state that is on New Jersey’s travel advisory list.

“As you may know, there are many different reasons for which a student may be in quarantine, so therefore we are not going to report this number publicly so that is not misleading,” said Brown.

The lack of transparency presents building concern, as universities have been forced to shut down and abandon their fall plans due to climbing coronavirus cases and the difficulty that comes along with enforcing restrictions.



**THE Rider News**  
**COVID - 19 Counter**

### Confirmed Cases

**10**  
Cumulative number of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases at Rider University (since March 2020)

**Students quarantined: University refused to disclose**

### COVID-19 case reports to Rider University by month:

Month / Year	Student Case Reports	Employee Case Reports
September 2020	1	0
August 2020	3	1
July 2020	0	0
June 2020	0	2
May 2020	0	0
April 2020	0	1
March 2020	1	1

**Students tested: University refused to disclose**

Rider reported its first case of coronavirus in September, with university officials unable to confirm if the off-campus student had been on the Lawrenceville campus at any point.

## Rider preps for surveillance testing program in October

By Austin Boland-Ferguson

**I**n response to student concerns and changing NCAA requirements, Rider University secured inventories of multiple types of COVID-19 tests and plans to roll out a trial of random testing starting in October, according to Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Planning Debbie Stasolla.

According to the university’s numbers, the first three weeks of remote classes were relatively free of the spread of COVID-19, only confirming one case on Sept. 1. Since hybrid-form classes started on Sept. 21, the university confirmed one case of COVID-19 on Sept. 22.

As of Sept. 2, according to Associate Vice President for University Marketing and Communications Kristine Brown, Rider had access to 100 nasal tests from Quest Diagnostics and was in the

process of acquiring 100 saliva test kits from Accurate Diagnostics.

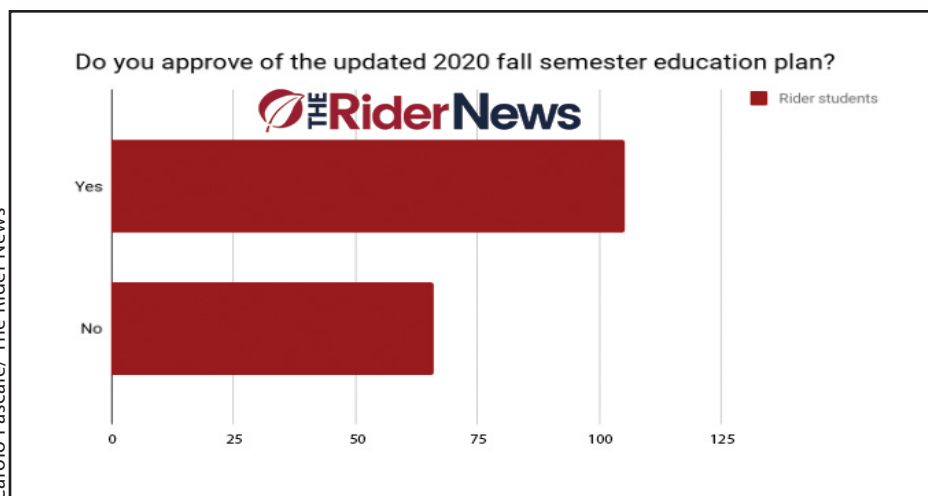
In an interview with The Rider News on Sept. 22, Stasolla said the university secured those 100 saliva tests and arranged a contract with both companies to maintain an inventory of both types of tests at all times.

“Whether it’s the nasal swabs or the saliva tests, we have arrangements with the two companies,” Stasolla said. “When our inventory gets to a certain point, we can reorder another 25 or 50 tests.” Stasolla added that when tests are restocked will be determined by the respective companies the tests come from.

Stasolla also said that Rider received an order of “a couple of thousand” rapid antigen tests. Rapid antigen tests are fast-acting tests with the

**SEE MORE TESTING PAGE 3**

## The Rider News survey results show majority student approval of 2020 fall semester plan



Student survey participants largely approve of the fall semester plan, though some also wished for better communication about it.

By Tatyanna Carman

**A**s students return for the first week of in-person classes, a survey conducted by The Rider News revealed that a majority of students have been pleased with Rider’s fall reopening plan, with only some worrying details about the coronavirus regulations on campus.

There were 171 participants in The Rider News student survey, which ran from Sept. 11 to Sept. 19. Overall, 61% of participants approve of the updated 2020 fall semester education plan, while 38% do not.

“The plan is fine except for three weeks virtual and the rest in person,” sophomore arts and entertainment industries management major Rachel Katz said. “I think it should be one or the other. It’s very confusing when they let you choose because every class is different, and it makes it very messy. I am commuting this semester but I feel more comfortable going to my in-person classes with the mandatory masks and people reporting symptoms each day who live on campus.”

Master of Arts in teaching graduate student Alexander Kuhn said that he does not approve of the updated 2020 fall semester education plan and said he was lucky to have an instructor who’s decided to remain fully remote, but “not everybody can be so fortunate.”

However, the university gave students the option

**SEE FEW STUDENTS PAGE 2**

### INSIDE FUTURE STAR

Freshman Corey McKeithan is tipped for a bright future  
**PAGE 12**



### NO MORE TIME

The United Nations made a statement on how much time the world has left to reverse climate change.  
**PAGE 8**



### CHAT WITH CHHAVI

Chhavi Verg opens up about her culture, obstacles she faces as an immigrant in America and more.  
**PAGE 6**

## SECURITY BRIEFS

BY STEPHEN NEUKAM

### Smoke Signals

Fired up. On Sept. 19 at 12:49 p.m., a passerby observed smoke coming from the outer fields while driving on Interstate Highway 295. The driver contacted Public Safety and an officer located a 10-by-15-foot section of grass on fire. The fire was extinguished and while there is no known cause of the blaze, it may have been caused by power lines.

### Laptop Located

Technical difficulties. On Sept. 16 at 3:12 p.m., an Office of Information Technology lab manager reported a stolen or missing laptop that she was using in the Student Recreation Center (SRC). The employee checked with SRC staff and they did not know where the laptop was. The next day, the cameras were reviewed and it was found that a Starbucks employee picked up the laptop and put it into a closet. The laptop was located and returned.

### No Guests Allowed

Rulebreaker. On Sept. 19 at 2:46 p.m. Public Safety was dispatched to Switlik Hall for a report of an argument between a male and a female. An officer spoke with the female, a Rider student, who reported that it was a minor altercation and that the male, not a Rider student, had already left. The female student was referred to the Office of Community Standards for possibly violating the restrictions put in place for coronavirus protection, including the rule that no outside guests are allowed in residence halls.

— Information provided by Interim Capt. Matthew Babcock

## A few students express concerns about 2020 fall semester plan

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to take classes fully remotely for the entire fall semester and in a university-wide email sent on Aug. 14, said that students who have chosen this class modality, “may continue to do so.”

“I think reopening the campus in any capacity is dangerous and asking for trouble,” Kuhn said. “It’s the duty of the university administration to manage risk, even if that means taking personal risk management responsibility out of the hands of students and faculty. Make the difficult decisions that you have the power to make so that others aren’t forced to.”

Overall, 82% of participants approve of the updated 2020 fall semester safety plan, while 17% do not approve.

Kuhn said that as far as the safety plan goes, “it also feels like a lowest common denominator situation.”

“Follow guidelines for reopening, but don’t really go any further than that. It feels like the easy way out; the path of least resistance,” Kuhn said. “Let’s face it, students self-reporting on an app isn’t going to do anything.”

According to the survey results, 39% of the student participants prefer in-person classes, 27% prefer remote, 24% prefer synchronous hybrid, with real-time virtual class meetings and 8% prefer asynchronous hybrid with no real-time virtual classes.

These student self-reported course preferences, however, do not reflect current class offerings. Only 4% of fall courses are fully in person, according to data presented at convocation by Rider President Gregory Dell’Omo.

The vast majority of courses — 82% — are fully remote and 14% are hybrids, according to Dell’Omo’s presentation.

Some students had mixed feelings about their class modalities.

Kuhn said that in the current climate, fully-online “is not only preferable but necessary,” especially for graduate-level education.

Katz said, “Currently, I like the hybrid model. I am excited to go back in person. I don’t mind online classes, but they are very hard to manage and it’s going to feel good to have at least one thing that is back to normal.”

Sophomore accounting major Matthew Swinehart said he looks forward “to the day when we can have in-person classes again without any safety concerns” but thinks it’s safer to do virtual classes for now.

Master of Arts in teaching graduate student Sophia Brana explained that she would have liked to have some in-person classes this semester because teaching is a very “hands-on, experience-based profession” and felt like she did not get the graduate school experience she anticipated.

“I feel like I have missed out on a lot of learning opportunities that come with meeting classmates and collaborating in ways that Zoom just can’t support,” Brana said. “Spring 2019 was my first semester at Rider, so I did not have much of an opportunity to experience the campus or learn in a classroom setting.”

Of the 82% of classes that are fully remote this semester, 77% are fully or partially synchronous and 23% are asynchronous, according to university data.

Sixty-six percent of students who took the survey approved of the university’s communication about the 2020 fall semester plan to the Rider community and 33.9% did not.

In contrast, Katz said that she found Rider’s communication to be “really not satisfactory.”

“I understand they were figuring everything out still, but they waited so long to tell us, changed the plan, and nothing seemed to ever be for certain,” Katz said. “The lack of communication throughout the summer months made many students anxious and it was something I think Rider should have worked on.”

Swinehart said that he wished the university waited for the original deadline to announce whether Rider would return to in-person classes or remain virtual.

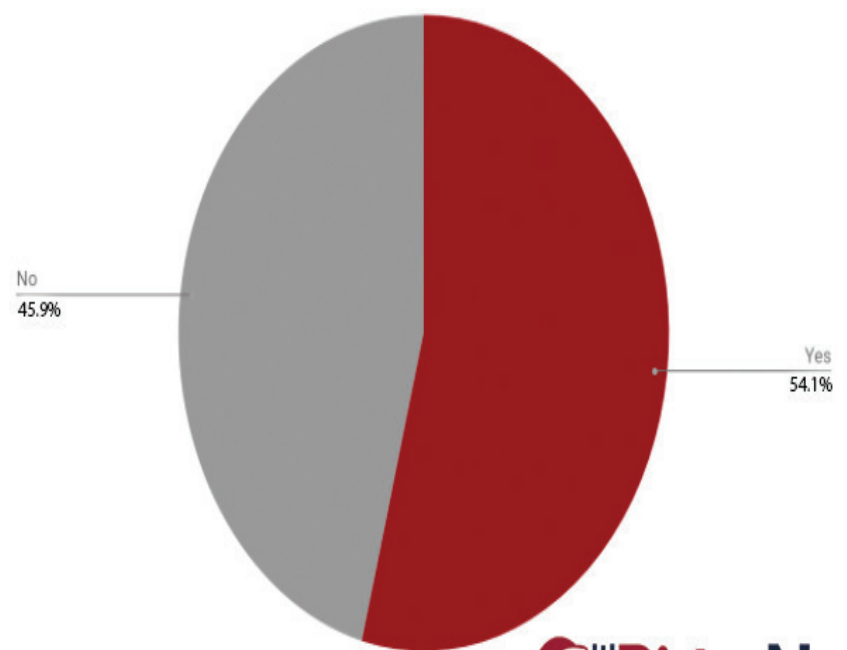
“Instead of waiting until Friday to make the decision, Rider did so on Tuesday, and said we had to cancel our room before Monday of next week or else we’d be fined for not doing so,” Swinehart said. “I held out for a couple of days, but then canceled my room. Several hours later, the announcement came in we’d possibly be able to go back, which was confirmed Friday. The fact that I would have to go through the housing selection process for a third time, and not be guaranteed my formerly picked room or have to room with a random, played a major part in my final decision.”

“We will do our best to honor the previously held housing assignment,” the email read.

Swinehart also said that he would like to see a “better breakdown” of new coronavirus cases on campus.

“I understand concerns on privacy and such, but if the university wants students to be more careful and aware, they should publish where a case or cluster originated from and make it easily accessible for students, staff, and family to see,” Swinehart

Do you think social distancing and mask restriction are being adhered to on campus?



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News



The Rider News survey showed that more than half of student survey participants think that social distancing and mask restrictions are being adhered to.

said. “Even though I’m living at home, I still have several friends that went back, so of course I’m concerned about their safety.”

Kuhn also did not approve of the university’s communication about the 2020 fall semester plan and said it was insufficient but could easily be remedied with a regular weekly update either on the Rider homepage or via email.

Fifty-four percent of student participants that live on campus think social distancing and mask restrictions have been adhered to, as opposed to the 45.9% of students who do not think they have been.

Senior psychology major and community assistant (CA) in Beckett Village Alyssa Darden said that she wasn’t surprised by these results.

“That doesn’t surprise me, but I also wouldn’t be surprised if it were higher,” Darden said. “We’re not able to see what happens behind closed doors and if residents are actually adhering to the one guest within the same building while maintaining 6 feet [apart] and wearing masks policy.”

Fifty-five percent of students who took the survey and live on campus reported difficulties joining Zoom classes or performing other classwork online due to problems with NoWires, campus WiFi or campus wired ethernet connections. Forty-four percent said that they did not have issues with this.

“Before classes started, I lost WiFi connection on campus once due a thunderstorm,” Darden said. “I know that the college is currently working to get their servers offline so that we don’t lose WiFi every time the power goes out. I’m not sure if the building you’re in effects your WiFi connection, but I haven’t had any problems in Beckett Village.”

The majority of the survey respondents live off-campus with family or others who are not Rider students with 66%. Twenty-three percent live on campus at Rider, and 9% live with Rider students off-campus.

Associate Vice President for University Marketing and Communications Kristine Brown declined to comment.

Katz, Swinehart and Brana live with their families. Kuhn lives off-campus with friends.

“I know the University administration and teaching faculty are human. I know that these are impossible questions to answer and they’re under a lot of pressure,” Kuhn said. “No decision is going to satisfy 100% of people, but from my perspective, there is an answer that keeps people as close to 100% safe as possible. I think we would all benefit from more transparency. Let us see the rationale behind the decisions that are being made and let us see that there are human beings making them. We all have to be understanding right now, and there are measures that make that easier.”



# More testing, more quarantine space planned in university's future

CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

goal of detecting the presence of viral antigens, which imply current infection of a particular virus and usually return results within 30 minutes.

"[The tests] are something we ordered earlier in the summer, so now we're waiting on the machines to be able to analyze those tests," Stasolla said.

According to Stasolla, the university has plans to start "surveillance testing," or random testing, in early October to accommodate student needs and everchanging NCAA testing requirements.

"We would start with our residential students and, perhaps, if commuting students are interested, we would have to figure that out," Stasolla said about surveillance testing. "We would do it in conjunction with testing that will likely be required by the NCAA for men's and women's basketball and wrestling [teams], but even there the NCAA keeps postponing its decision, so we're trying to keep up with non-decisions and changing decisions."

The status of the NCAA's policy on testing students and student-athletes has also held up the university from being able to allocate its rapid antigen tests for use on campus.

"How we will use those tests will depend on what we're required to do by the NCAA," Stasolla said.

Should the university be able to use its rapid antigen tests for surveillance testing of resident students, Stasolla said that testing process would have to be frequent.

"[Rapid tests] can be used for surveillance testing if they're used frequently, like three times a week," Stasolla said. "If you only do it one time a week, it's not good to use for that purpose."

If surveillance testing goes well in the fall, Stasolla said the university has plans to expand its surveillance testing program for the Spring 2021 semester.

In agreement with recent advice from the Director



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

Resident students will be randomly selected for COVID-19 tests starting in October and will report to health services staff for the procedure.

of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Anthony Fauci and Coronavirus Response Coordinator for the White House Coronavirus Task Force Deborah Birx, the university has opened quarantine and isolation housing for any residential student that may need it.

"Originally, we were going to ask residential students who lived within 75 miles of Rider to go home to quarantine and isolate," Stasolla said. "Because of recent guidance that was shared and because we have additional space on campus ... we have since decided and have been communicating that we will accommodate any residential student, no matter how far you live from Rider, to quarantine or isolate on campus."

Stasolla also said that Rider has made plans to increase its capacity for both quarantine and isolation housing, which would bring the total amount of quarantine spaces from 100 to 160 and isolation spaces from 22 to about 50. Spaces utilized would include Conover Hall, a combination of the greek houses on campus, including University House and property that the university owns on nearby West Long Drive in Lawrenceville.

Should quarantine and isolation housing begin to near its capacities, Stasolla warned that there would be a "good chance" Rider moves to remote instruction and sends students home as opposed to trying to isolate and quarantine students on the Princeton campus.

"The Princeton campus is considered a last resort, because then we have to be mindful of having students several miles down the road," Stasolla said.

Ultimately, Stasolla believes that a surveillance testing program will help the Rider community better understand the situation concerning COVID-19 around them.

"We've heard students loud and clear about their interest in doing some sort of random testing so that we have a better idea of the degree to which COVID may be in our community or not," Stasolla said.

## Campus Clear will now be used as an admission ticket into certain facilities

By Hailey Hensley

**S**TUDENTS all over campus have been asked to file away a daily symptom report with the Campus Clear App to decide if it is safe for them to attend class and enter campus buildings or not.

Students are expected to input their daily symptoms into the app and from there, they receive information about whether or not they are free to roam campus. The app can also suggest a student report to health services or quarantine, according to an Aug. 5 announcement by the university.

This data is catalogued daily by the app and sent to the university. According to the terms of service on Campus Clear, the data can be decoded by "specific university administrators."

Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Planning Debbie Stasolla stated that the people who can view the data are affiliated with the Student Health Center and Human Resources, and that the data can only be accessed with help from the office of information technology.

These administrators have been entrusted to view a daily report of all student symptoms inputted into the app, according to the Campus Clear website.

"The data is organized in such a way that both offices can more easily identify those who are exhibiting symptoms or are otherwise not cleared to come on campus," she said. "It is still the responsibility of the student and employee to contact the Student Health Center or Human Resources when they are symptomatic, have tested positive for COVID-19 or been contacted by a contact tracer that they are a close contact of someone who has tested positive. But at least both offices have the benefit of the Campus Clear information to conduct any follow up if needed."

The university released a follow-up announcement on September 22 stating that in addition to checking temperatures, several locations on campus will also begin checking a student's campus clear status.

The announcement stated, "Effective Thursday, Sept. 24, the above locations will also check that you have completed Campus Clear and are cleared to be on campus via the app before they will allow you to utilize the Fitness Center, enter the Bookstore, dine-in or pick up food in Daly Dining Hall or Cranberry's. If you have an elevated temperature or are symptomatic on Campus Clear, you will be asked to contact either the Student Health Center or Human Resources as soon as possible."

Stasolla made it clear that though Campus Clear is useful for helping to keep campus safe, the app is not for contact tracing. This is also stated in the app, and the app does not have permission to access user's locations at any time.

She stated that "...we [the university] are not using Campus Clear for contact tracing purposes. We have a team of contact tracers led by Chris Botti, Associate Dean of Students, and consisting of Student Affairs and Human Resources staff who have all been trained via the Johns Hopkins Contact Training Program and who are working closely with the Lawrence Township Health Department."

Stasolla emphasized the fact that the contact tracers do their job very thoroughly, working with outside entities when necessary.

How are you feeling?	Tested Positive	Influenza, like illness	Fever over 100F / 37.8C	NEW Cough	Shortness of breath	Sore throat	Diarrhea / Nausea	NEW Lack of smell	Clear
June 14, 2020	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1501
June 13, 2020	4	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1444
#5y56y3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
#ytpj68i	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Daily Summary**  
Today is June 1, 2020

- New Confirmed Positive Cases: 2 / 8 Total
- New Recovered Cases: 2 / 8 Total
- Reported Symptoms: 12
- International Travel: 12
- Self-Reports: 120

Courtesy of Campus Clear

Pictured above is an example administrative daily report, which shows students daily symptoms.

"They [the contact tracers] reach out to Rider community members...who test positive for COVID-19 to determine what, if any, Rider or other individuals they have been in close contact with as defined by the Center for Disease Control (CDC)," she said. "Contact tracers, in turn, then contact those Rider community members to encourage them to be tested and...quarantine.... For anyone outside the Rider community, contact tracers work with the Lawrence Township Health Department to turn over further contact tracing responsibilities to them or the appropriate health department depending on where the individual resides."

Sophomore dance and acting major Josiah Jacoby returned to campus this year and believes the Campus Clear app is a good thing for the Rider community.

I definitely think the app is helpful and it was a good idea, but it could use better implementation. There isn't any penalty to not doing the app every morning and I can almost guarantee most people don't," Jacoby said. "Nobody wants to not be allowed to use campus because they have a cough or a slight fever which probably isn't due to COVID. However, having a daily reminder that this is a big deal will probably help because it will remind people daily to stay safe, wear a mask, social distance, and wash your hands."



# Rider alumni host Race Relations discussion for rider community

By Aaliyah Patel and Victoria Pender

**R**ACE Relations: A Community Discussion Continued series organized by Rider alumni Jelani Walker and Dalin Hackley, held open community dialogue regarding the current racial climate around the world for students, staff and faculty at 6:30 p.m. on Sept. 17. on Zoom.

Supported by the Center of Diversity and Inclusion (CDI), this event intended to discuss the topic of “Racism in America: Where we’ve been, Where we are and Where we’re going.”

Pamela Pruitt, the executive director for CDI states, “Jelani and Dalin had done a teach-in for one of the faculty. When I heard about it, I thought it would be a great way to continue the conversation about race relations.”

Following the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks and others, attendees shared their thoughts, emotions and suggestions on advocating for equality and inclusivity within local communities. Panelists alumna Shanza Arooji, Ashley Archer, Assistant Professor Cynthia Martinez and senior communication studies major Givanna Troilo generated the discussions.

Hackley said, “To be honest, I think that any opportunity for students to be able to discuss the issues of what is happening in this country is a positive thing. I think there were things that we could have worked on more or done differently, but I am appreciative of those who came, spoke and participated in what was a pretty long event focused on an important conversation.”

Topics such as systemic racism and police brutality centralized the focus of the discussions.

Walker said “A lot of students, up until now, are emotional about how things have been happening in this country. This was a way for the community to come out and discuss what it is that they think is going on and how we can change it.”

Student voices were not heard by the whole group until two hours into the community discussion. When they were, it was through two Zoom breakout sessions.

Kayla McIntrye, a freshman global studies major, was an attendee who felt there was room for improvement on these discussions.

“Ask the students these questions especially when the majority of students in these discussions identify as Black or as a person of color,” McIntrye said.

There was only one student on the board of panelists, Troilo, who is a white woman.

McIntrye stated “It was a normal discussion on that topic but, for me it was the fact that there was only one Black panelist that was answering questions. I understand the importance of allies in this discussion but when you’re talking about [how] you’d never know [what] it’s like to be Black during this time and you give your opinions on this feeling, why not give your platform to those who have experienced these things.”

Attendee Yusef Collins-Bryant, a freshman popular music studies major also echoed similar sentiments.

Collins-Bryant stated, “These conversations need to happen but action also needs to be done.”

According to Data USA, 11.8% of Rider students identify as Black or African American.

## RACE RELATIONS: A COMMUNITY DISCUSSION CONTINUED

JOIN US!

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 | 6:30 P.M.  
Zoom - Register in Advance: [rider.edu/race-relations](https://rider.edu/race-relations)

Following the passing of George Floyd and, most recently, Jacob Blake, the response of protestors and law enforcement have captivated the world. Discussions regarding race relations have ensued with some calling for radical change in America. Led by two well-known Rider graduates, Jelani Walker and Dalin Hackley, this event will continue a dialogue among the Rider community regarding these issues. Attendees will be engaged in a conversation with a panel of students, faculty and staff to discuss the state of race relations at Rider and in our local communities, as well as suggest solutions to foster equality and acceptance within both Rider University and where we live.

RIDER UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR  
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION  
Unity + Diversity = University

Courtesy of Rider University



The discussion allowed for Rider students to open up about their experiences and opinions on race relations.

“I think trying to identify the message that we wanted to give was the most difficult part ... It won’t be overnight that we address something as deep as systemic racism in America,” Hackley said.

# Whole Foods makes massive donation to Rider Resource Pantry



Courtesy of Rider University

The pantry stocks school supplies, food and personal hygiene items for all Rider students in need.

By Austin Boland-Ferguson

**R**IDER’S resource pantry received a generous donation totaling thousands of dollars from a nonprofit program sponsored by a local food market.

Throughout the calendar year, local Whole Foods Market locations stock 5 cents for every customer who uses a reusable bag. Every quarter, each location chooses a nonprofit organization to donate the collection of nickels to help benefit

its cause and operations.

For the first half of 2020, the Princeton, New Jersey, location of Whole Foods Market chose the Rider Resource Pantry as its recipient for the Nickels for Nonprofit initiative.

According to a news release from Rider, the donation from Whole Foods Market will go toward operations of the pantry, which includes securing supplies like clothing, toiletries and food to students in need of those resources.

The Rider Resource Pantry first opened in 2018 with the aforementioned goal to secure supplies for food and resource-insecure students. Since then, the Rider Resource Pantry has continually delivered on its goal, even supplying resources to dozens of students throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Upon its 2018 opening, Assistant Director of the Student Support Services program Dana Lopes had commented about the importance of securing resources to ensure academic success.

“The Pantry helps provide them with the essentials so they don’t need to worry how they’ll get their next meal or what to do if their winter coat is fraying,” Lopes said in 2018. “They can focus on their studies and finishing their degree.”

Princeton’s Whole Market Foods team leader, Joe Anselmi, reflected Lopes’ original words when he told the university that, “Students will be more successful if they’re not worried about where their next meal is coming from. Our team is proud to provide local students a hand up when it’s needed.”

Outside of Whole Foods Market’s donation, a lot of the Rider Resource Pantry’s funding relies on an annual donation from Gourmet Dining. Since the start of Gourmet Dining’s work with Rider, it has donated \$5,000 each year.

Whole Foods Market recently made a shift toward community-based work through the Nickel for Nonprofits program. The national website for the food market noted that their community donations, “will be led by local Team Member networks across the company, who are empowered to address the specific needs within their community.”

*The Rider Resource Pantry is located in the Joseph P. Vona Center attached to Daly Dining Hall.*



# Unified sports club continues to thrive with virtual practices

By Christian McCarville

**U**NIFIED sports is one of the most fulfilling and gratifying organizations that Rider has to offer. With an emphasis on inclusion and friendly competition, the club pairs Rider students with Special Olympics athletes in a variety of different sports.

Junior finance major Sam Poehlmann explained what originally brought him to joining the unified sports club and his experience since then.

“I thought it would be a rewarding experience and it has been,” said Poehlmann. “The athletes have great personalities and it always makes me smile. It’s an awesome feeling to be able to return the favor.”

The club typically hosts unified soccer during the fall semester and unified basketball in the spring. However, this semester is anything but typical.

Taking safety precautions and protective measures against COVID-19, unified sports is now holding virtual practices for members. This allows the club to continue

operations, making full use of Zoom video chat and other online applications.

The club meets weekly over Zoom for practice. To keep things interesting, participants get to vote on the theme for the Zoom meeting each week. Past themes have included wearing sports jerseys, unified gear and pajama day.

The club also prepares fun activities for each week’s Zoom meeting. Junior computer science major and President of unified sports and junior computer science major Elizabeth O’Hara, gave some insight as to what activities are done during these meetings.

“We always begin with some sort of get-to-know-you activity such as Something in Common, Pits and Peaks of the week, and explaining our favorite picture on our phone,” said O’Hara. “We also still like to find ways to get our members moving, so we have been using Special Olympics’ YouTube channel for virtual yoga and fitness classes. We then move into breakout rooms and have activities like trivia, Scattergories, scavenger hunts and Pictionary. We end every practice by announcing a Partner and Athlete of the week.”

The unified sports club also has plans to collaborate with the Council for Exceptional Children and other college unified programs in hosting more virtual events. Opening the doors for more virtual opportunities allows all members of the club to continue participating and staying in touch while also keeping safe.

“There’s no doubt that we’d rather be in person playing sports, but we’ve still had fun online,” said Poehlmann. “We are going to start playing some e-sports, namely Rocket League, so that should be enjoyable as well.”

These e-sports are a great remote opportunity for the club and they are offered through Special Olympics New Jersey.

“We compete individually every week as a club and at the end of the season we will be participating in the unified cup against local college unified programs,” said O’Hara.

The bonds and friendships formed within Rider’s unified sports club appear to be unphased by the ongoing pandemic. The club, like many others, adapted to their circumstances and made adjustments to continue practicing inclusion and acceptance.

“Our athlete’s enthusiasm, determination and sportsmanship inspire me every day and reminds me that I should be working to build a culture of inclusion and respect everywhere I go,” said O’Hara. “sports are a powerful agent for social change, and I am glad that Rider unified is part of being an equalizer.”



Courtesy of unified sports

Unified sports club meets via Zoom for practice. Each week the club votes on a theme and fun activity for the meeting.



Courtesy of unified sports

Unified sports pairs Rider students with Special Olympics athletes in a variety of different activities. In order to follow safety precautions unified sports is holding virtual sports practice. The club has plans to collaborate with the Council for Exceptional Children and other college unified programs in hosting more virtual events.



Courtesy of unified sports

Typically the club hosts unified soccer during the fall semester and unified basketball in the spring.



Courtesy of unified sports

Despite operating virtually this semester the bonds made in the unified sports remain strong. The club continues practicing inclusion and acceptance.



# Drop it like it's hot: Film screening portrays the '95 Chicago heatwave

By Christian McCarville

THE Green Film series has been a recurring event on campus since the fall of 2009. The event typically revolves around a film with pro-environmental themes. These themes grow more relevant each day as the threat of climate change continues to loom over our heads.

On the evenings of Sept. 15 and 16, the Office of Sustainability joined forces with the Center for Diversity and Inclusion to present the next continuation of the Green Film series. At this event, the film "Cooked: Survival by Zipcode" was shown to a virtual audience including students, faculty and staff.

This film portrays the 1995 Chicago heat wave in which 739 people in the city died over one week due to heat-related deaths. From these 739 people, the majority were black, elderly and living in low-income areas. The film addresses this disparity of deaths during the brutal heatwave while also discussing similar occurrences during other natural disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy.

Director of Sustainability Melissa Greenberg emphasized the need for awareness of the film's main topic: environmental racism.

"Most people don't automatically think about poverty or racism when they hear the term sustainability," said Greenberg. "Even those that live in underserved communities may not have ever heard the term environmental racism, but it's a global reality and needs

to be addressed.

Educating on this topic is important to fully understand the effects of climate change and sustainability."

The film connects climate change and racism by portraying how many people of color have been systematically restricted to low-income areas where they cannot properly defend against a changing climate.

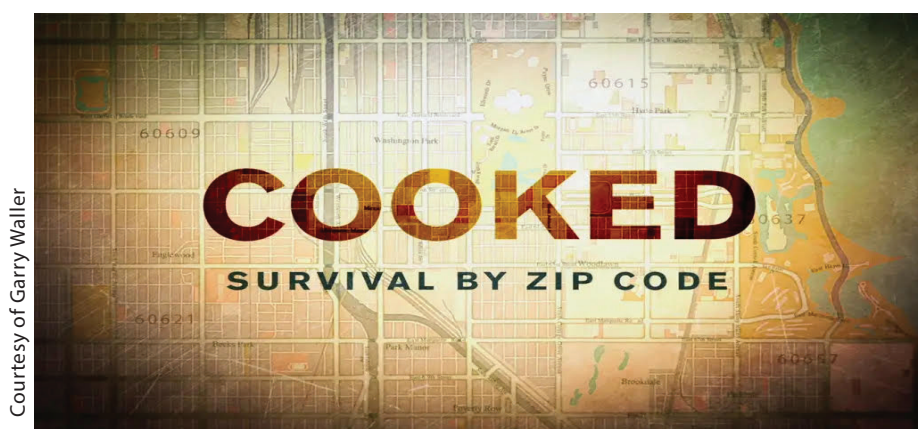
Greenberg commented on how these communities are impacted by the negative implications of climate change.

"Climate change hits these communities the hardest not only in the United States, but globally," said Greenberg. "Some eye-opening scenes of the film showed how millions of dollars are spent on disaster preparedness just in case something happens while neighboring communities struggle with keeping the electricity on for fans or air conditioners, or the fear of simply opening a window in a 'high crime' neighborhood."

This film was enlightening to many who had not considered how climate change affected those that lack the luxury of air conditioning and electricity.

Senior environmental science major and eco-representative Dean Riddle provided some further insight into global warming.

"We are going through unprecedented times of extreme weather with hotter and colder temperature extremes," said Riddle. "If these patterns continue, there's no promise the world will be the way as we know it for future generations to enjoy. It's up to each and every one



Judith Helfand's film "Cooked: Survival by Zipcode" brilliantly ties together themes of climate change and racial injustice.

of us to take action and do what we can to make the environment better for now and the future."

Greenberg went on to explain her experience in holding the Green Film event with an entirely virtual audience.

"With this film, we experienced technical difficulties during the first night's screening that resulted in some people missing the film altogether," said Greenberg. "For those that were able to see the film and participate in the discussion to follow, it was a great success with many students sharing their views about the film and their personal experiences."

The second night's screening resulted in much less technical difficulties and even included a surprise panel discussion with the film's director.

"In seeking a viewing solution for the night two screening, we got tremendously lucky. We found out that Peabody

Award-winning filmmaker Judith Helfand was hosting a film screening and panel discussion that was free and open to the public through a virtual platform the same night, at the same time," said Greenberg.

The second screening began with a gathering on Zoom as planned, but after some announcements and a preview of next month's film, the audience was asked to click a link in the chat box to enter a new Zoom room for the screening of the film. Following this, students were able to view the panel discussion and participate by entering questions in the chat.

"This was a bonus experience that we had not anticipated when we planned the film screening months before," said Greenberg. "Our technical challenges turned out to be a blessing in disguise and although stressful, totally worth it."

Courtesy of Garry Waller

# UPCOMING EVENT CALENDAR

WED, SEPT. 23

2020 Business of Media with Coach Jason Brown of Netflix's Last Chance U

12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

THU, SEPT. 24

Accounting and Finance Virtual Career Fair

11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Longstreet House Virtual Dedication

11:30 p.m. - 12:00 p.m.

A Virtual Discussion with Christine Todd

7:00 p.m.

FRI, SEPT. 25

Comedian Rob Bebenek

7:00 p.m.

Courtesy of Arianna Marino/The Rider News

# Former Miss New Jersey tells her story and celebrates diversity

By Sarah Siock

STUDENTS were given the opportunity to see beyond the glitz of the beauty pageant industry in a virtual sit-down interview with former Miss New Jersey Chhavi Verg.

Verg entered the beauty pageant circuit when she was in high school and before she knew it, she was competing in the Miss USA competition. Only a few years after entering her first pageant, Verg became the second Indian American Miss New Jersey and went on to be the first runner-up in the 2017 Miss USA competition.

Now Verg uses her platform to advocate for women's rights and South Asian representation in the entertainment industry.

Verg shared her story with Rider students on Sept. 18 at an event called "Chat with Chhavi." Junior digital marketing major Alyssa Unciano organized the event as the cultural chair of the Student Entertainment Council.

"I really hold myself to create a safe space and platform that allows minorities to speak about their own stories. I also want to find relatable celebrities that can influence and educate others. This was the entire purpose of the event," said Unciano.

"Chat with Chhavi" was styled as a virtual Q&A with Verg covering topics ranging from diversity and colorism to immigration. Students were able to join via Zoom to ask Verg questions. Unciano aimed for the event to give representation and educate students about these subjects.

Originally, Unciano planned for the event to be called "Rider Runway" with Verg as the host. "Rider Runway" was set to be a cultural beauty pageant where participants showed off their traditional clothing. However, the event was put on hold due to a low number of student participants. Unciano decided to transform the event into a sitdown interview with Verg.

"I really pushed and did not give up on this event. Chhavi is a knowledgeable and educated speaker who has her own story to tell. I cannot stress how important

it is for students to know about the topics she discussed," said Unciano.

During "Chat with Chhavi," Verg shared her experiences beyond the glamour of the pageant industry.

She spoke about her immigration journey from India to the United States as well as social injustices seen today.



Being the second Indian American Miss New Jersey, Chhavi Verg is rightfully proud of her cultural background. She now utilizes her platform to advocate for change, especially in the beauty industry.

Courtesy of @ChhaviVerg on Instagram

"Many immigrant children can relate to not feeling fully American. I had this strong desire to win Miss USA and show the world that the stereotypical view of what an American looks like is changing," said Verg. "America is made up of all different minorities, and we are just as American. To have the opportunity to share that message was very important to me."

Verg told students that her parents had little money after they moved to New Jersey from India. She was just 4 years old, and her parents worked around the clock to make ends meet.

"It takes a lot of guts to drop everything you know and move your whole family to a place where you do not know anything. I find it so inspiring that my parents were able to do that," Verg said.

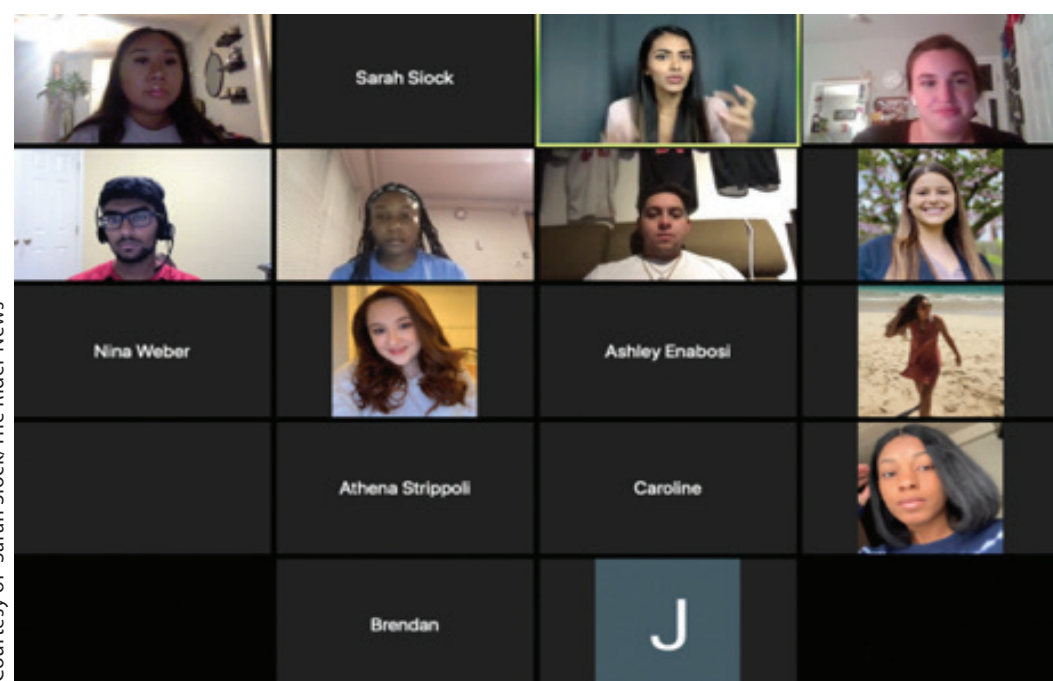
A large portion of the event focused on Verg's thoughts regarding colorism in the beauty industry. Verg shared stories regarding colorism in her life as well as ways to bring awareness to the racial biases in the industry.

"Social media can help in ending colorism. That just comes through seeing more representation and really challenging these beliefs. The people who are ignorant and still holding these beliefs in place need to be held accountable," she said.

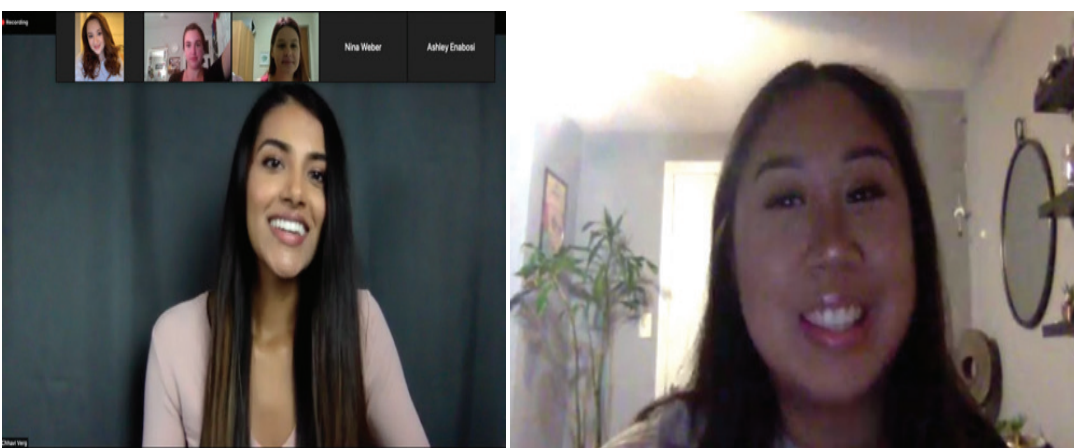
Participants at "Chat with Chhavi" felt the event was a welcoming environment to address these issues. "It was interesting to hear from someone who is a woman of color talking about colorism, racism and sexism. It was very impactful to hear how these different topics impacted Chhavi's life," said Suchitha Kumar, a senior psychology major.

Unciano added that she is striving to give more minority representation by planning events that are similar to "Chat with Chhavi." Next month, Unciano booked Akeem Olaj, a spoken word artist, to deliver an education of social injustices through poetry.

# Chhavi's Chatroom: A discussion of race, gender and more



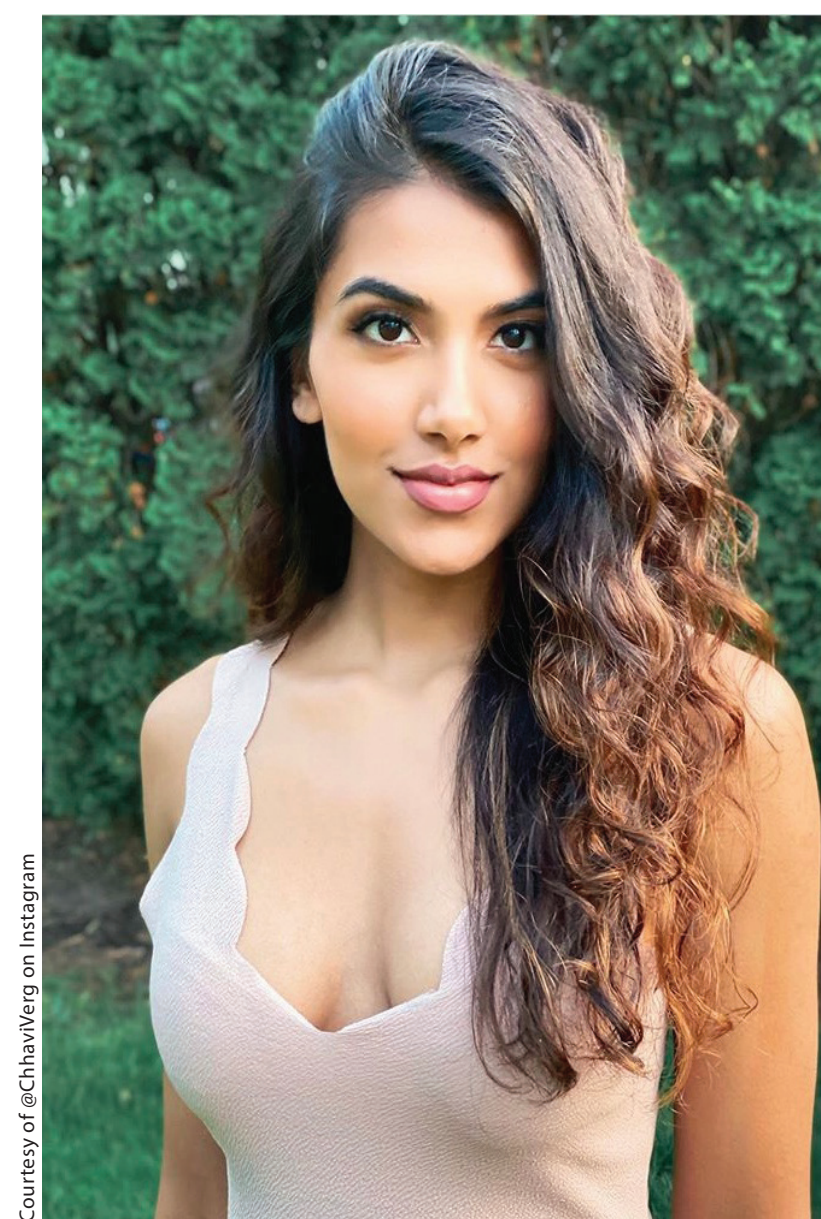
Chat with Chhavi was held via Zoom for the safety and convenience of all students and participants. The Student Entertainment Council has been utilizing the Zoom platform to host the majority of its virtual events.



Junior digital marketing major Alyssa Unciano is the current cultural chair of the Student Entertainment Council. She organized this event with the intention of expressing and celebrating one's culture.

Courtesy of Sarah Siock/The Rider News

Courtesy of Saarah Siock/The Rider News



Courtesy of @ChhaviVerg on Instagram

Chhavi Verg aims to eliminate colorism from the beauty industry. She believes social media can aid in the fight against colorism, as it allows for wider representation of many cultures and ethnicities.



## Wake up! Time is ticking on climate change

**A**LMOST two years ago, I was sitting in the same spot writing an editorial on the same topic: climate change and how the high levels of carbon dioxide have contributed to global warming. Two years ago the Washington Post declared that the world had less than 10 years to get climate change under control, as predicted by United Nations scientists.

Two years later, the United Nations (UN) has issued another daunting statement about the life expectancy of the Earth. “We’ve reached the deadline — and the world has collectively failed to fully achieve a single goal,” according to the UN’s Global Biodiversity Outlook report. The “deadline” the UN references is The Aichi Biodiversity Targets. In 2010, leaders from 196 countries gathered in Japan and agreed on a list of goals designed to save the Earth. The plan laid out a 10-year plan to conserve the world’s biodiversity, promote sustainability, and protect ecosystems. The targets were ambitious, but crucial. One, for instance, aimed to prevent the extinction of threatened species and improve their status by 2020, according to CNN.

The Aichi Biodiversity Targets has five strategic goals that outlines the 20 targets to conserve the world’s biodiversity.

Strategic Goal A: Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society (Targets 1-4)

Strategic Goal B: Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use (Targets 5-10)

Strategic Goal C: To improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity (Targets 11-13)

Strategic Goal D: Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services (Targets 14- 16)

Strategic Goal E: Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building (Targets 17-20)

Of the 20 goals, only six have been “partially achieved,” according to CNN. On average, the participating countries reported that more than a third of national targets are on track to be met; half of the national targets were seeing slower progress; 11% of targets show no significant progress and 1% are actually moving in the wrong direction.

Although the topic seems more of a popular conversation in recent news, it is not a new one. Scientists have been detecting global warming since the 1800s. According to the American Institute of Physics, between 1800 and 1870, the level of carbon dioxide gas (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the atmosphere measured in ancient ice was about 290 ppm (parts per million). The average global temperature during this time (1850-1890) was roughly 13.7 degrees celsius, equating to 56.6 degrees fahrenheit. According to the American Institute of Physics, as of 2015 researchers found the

collapse of the West Antarctic ice sheet irreversible, bringing meters of sea-level rise over future centuries. “Average global temperature [in 2015] is 14.8 degrees celsius (58.6 degrees fahrenheit), the warmest in thousands of years. Level of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere goes above 400 ppm, the highest in millions of years.”

In Greenland, an iceberg floats in an inlet melting at an alarming rate. Scientists often consider Greenland “ground zero of the Earth’s climate,” and because the island is mostly in the Arctic, melting ice from Greenland’s ice sheets is the largest contributor to the rising sea levels that can become catastrophic for coastal communities of all land sources.

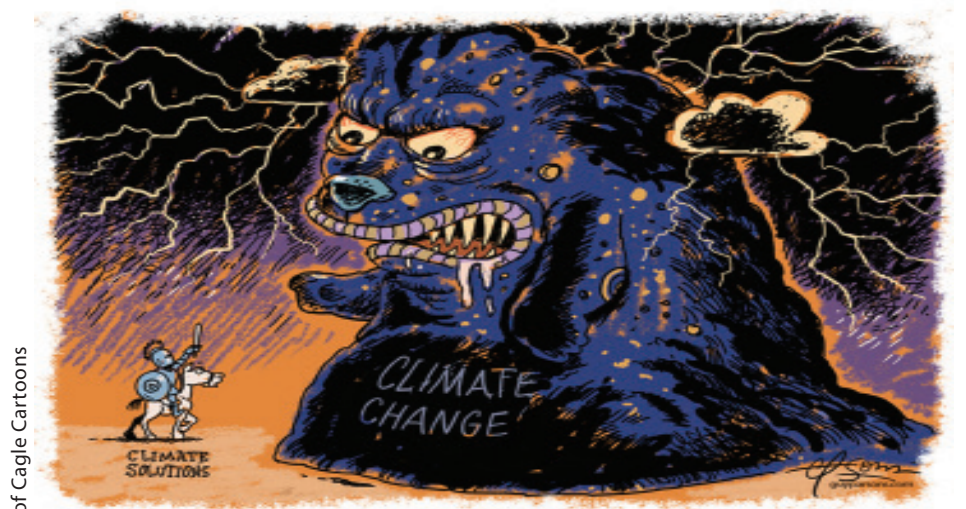
“The Climate Clock, unveiled by artists Gan Golan and Andrew Boyd, warned that there were 7 years, 101 days, 17 hours, 29 minutes and 22 seconds until Earth’s carbon budget is depleted, based on current emission rates. A total depletion would thrust the world into further turmoil and suffering through more flooding, more wildfires, worsening famine and extensive human displacement,” reported the Washington Post.

An alarming piece of information I came across is that just 100 companies are responsible for 71% of global emissions, according to The Guardian. A small number of fossil fuels producers as well as investors can be the solution in seizing climate change. If we continue our trajectory in the accelerating climate crisis, biodiversity will continue to deteriorate, driven by “currently unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, population growth and technological developments,” the Global Biodiversity Outlook report said. The responsibility begins to shift to the everyday person, calling for us to recycle and switch to paper straws, although things that will help it will not solve the problem. Instead, the responsibility should be geared toward the few multi-billion-dollar companies that have accumulated the majority of CO<sub>2</sub> in the world, but which one is easier?

The nation has seen a soar of wildfires across western and southwestern states in Wyoming, Oregon and California. In Oregon, the citizens are mourning the loss of national treasures and natural places after wildfires wiped out campgrounds, hot springs and wooded retreats that “have been touchstones for generations in a state known for its unspoiled beauty,” according to AP News. Oregon State Parks said that 900 acres within various parks had burned. The worst-hit location was Collier Memorial State Park near Klamath Falls, which lost 400 acres of ponderosa pine and a historic cabin. “Studies of ash and carbon layers show that the area burned at least twice before, in the 1500s and the 1800s. But the conditions this time were so dry and hot, with fierce winds pushing burning embers



Courtesy of Cagle Cartoons



Courtesy of Cagle Cartoons

## THE Rider News

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show that the area burned at least twice before, in the 1500s and the 1800s. But the conditions this time were so dry and hot, with fierce winds pushing burning embers a mile ahead of the fire line, that the forest's future is uncertain," according to AP News.

"I am from San Juan Capistrano in Orange County, California. I am very lucky that I moved out of [Los Angeles] two months before fire month. However, the air quality was awful for several days. Ash was falling in heavy quantities and a new layer can be found on my car every morning. In terms of being safe we try to stay indoors because of the air quality. I'm really lucky that I didn't have to evacuate. My grandparents moved to Oregon two weeks ago, their house was right in the path of the fires. They did have to evacuate for several days. Luckily they are safe as well as their home," said freshman journalism major Tristan Leach.

"Humanity stands at a crossroads with regard to the legacy it leaves to future generations. Biodiversity is declining at an unprecedented rate, and the pressures driving this decline are intensifying," the UN's Global Biodiversity Outlook report warned. The effects of climate change are obvious and severe, the time to turn a blind eye to the deterioration of the planet is far behind us. What I think we seem to forget is that nature is delicate and needs to be taken care of. Humans have overstayed their welcome and caused nothing but pollution to a once green and healthy planet. We should feel guilty for overpopulating and ravaging the Earth until nothing was left. I understand the need to survive, but we have become greedy for capital gain, not giving a second thought about the long term effects of industrialization. I call on my generation to consider electing officials who care about the Earth we inhabit and want to create a future our kids can live to see.

*This editorial expresses the unanimous opinion of The Rider News Editorial Board.  
This week's editorial was written by Opinion Editor Qur'an Hansford.*



## SOPHOMORE SEARCHINGS

### Is Rider doing enough to stop the spread of COVID-19?

**L**IVING on campus is living with constant bated breath. You never know when you will receive that email to pack up and get out, but you know it is going to come. Especially when every time you blink, another college's cases have spiked, and students are sent home to be fully remote for the remainder of the semester. It seems inevitable that this is in the future of every college in a state that is at least trying to stop the spread of COVID-19 and end this pandemic. While Rider does have rules in place, whether they are being followed and more importantly enforced, is a different story.

Before returning to campus, I was confident in Rider's steps to ensure the safety of its students and staff, and I believed if we could all come together and adhere to these rules, we might have a chance at staying on campus for more than a week. Then, I got to campus. As soon as I walked into my residence hall, the first thing I saw were people without masks, which according to Rider's Resolved and Ready plan, must be worn in residence buildings anytime you leave your room. It is no secret that mandating masks has been causing an uproar with many people, as everyone has a different comfort zone when it comes to this virus and many people do not feel the need to wear a mask. The point is, this is one of Rider's rules, and I have not seen anyone enforcing it unless you are going inside a nonresidential building. From my experience, that

is not an isolated case. Plenty of people are not wearing masks where they should be. Based on what I've experienced, next to nothing is being enforced — I haven't heard of anyone who is using the Campus Clear app, which students are supposed to utilize to report their symptoms, and there have been times when there was no one at the stations in dining facilities to take my temperature. What is being enforced is not being taken as seriously as it should. There are no rules, only suggestions.

I believe an essential rule to control the spread, and the most relevant to a college campus, is the limit of people gathering in enclosed spaces. In this case, the limit of guests in residential buildings. I completely acknowledge that it is a very hard job to regulate all of these things.

I am not alone in these feelings. This is not a time to be lenient, and I do not appreciate how our lives are being gambled with. All anyone wants is to have a good experience on campus this year, but by doing so carelessly, you are jeopardizing having an experience at all.

*sophomore sociology major  
Jillian LaFeir*

## GREEN CORNER

# What are you wearing? Believe me, it matters.

**I**n a world of online shopping, malls reopening, Labor Day sales and retail therapy, it is easier than ever to have all the latest trends on hand as quickly as someone can post an Instagram photo. The problem, however, is that disposable fashion is harming our planet and wasting our resources, as well as stimulating an industry earmarked by mistreatment, poor working conditions and minimum wages of those who make all the latest looks. Brands such as Fashion Nova, Forever 21, GAP, Urban Outfitters and countless more create products known as 'fast fashion.'

According to Webster's Dictionary, "fast fashion is a term to describe the speed at which fashion designs move from design concept to fashion product available for purchase. It is characterized by high volume, low margin, fast-paced, cheap and disposable items." Fast fashion produces such a large volume of inexpensive clothing, that a person no longer needs to spend a lot of money to possess an extensive closet. Junior art and entertainment industry management major Sara Burke says, "I try my best to always thrift to the best of my ability but it's always really difficult as a broke college student to not use fast fashion for stuff. It's awful to have to resort to it sometimes."

Unfortunately, the fast fashion industry is one of the top contributors to our growing climate crisis. According to Business Insider, fashion production makes up 10% of humanity's carbon emissions, dries up water sources and pollutes rivers and streams. Textile production is a very wasteful and inefficient process, making one kilogram of fabric generate an average of 23 kilograms of greenhouse gases. In an age of instant gratification and social media, the constantly changing trends keep production demands for inexpensive, and often low-quality textiles, high. It takes about 2,720 liters of water to produce just one cotton shirt — a number equivalent to what an average person drinks over three years, according to the Environmental Justice Foundation.

Fast Fashion is not only terrible for our environment, the entire industry is associated with the mistreatment of low-wage employees. Giants of the industry such as Victoria's Secret and GUESS have been accused of child labor and SOS messages from garment workers were reported to be found sewn into labels of the British clothing brand Primark, according to an article by BBC News.

The fast fashion industry is harmful to humanity. The need to wear the latest trends is costing us our planet, as well as the health and safety of garment workers around the world being taken advantage of with long hours, poor working conditions and measly wages.

The good news, however, is that you as a consumer have the power to tell this industry that they must change their practices, simply by choosing where you spend your money. With more than 150 billion articles of clothing produced per year, there is more clothing currently in existence than ever before, and you can buy a lot of it secondhand. Since the market crash of 2008, the popularity of thrifting, or shopping secondhand, has increased in commonality and normality. Not only is it no longer considered weird to shop for secondhand fashion but it's become a major source of clout. Thrifted items are considered to be a cool closet staple in the modern world. Sophomore musical theater major Kaedon Knight (frequently seen in one-of-a-kind thrifted outfits) says, "I like thrifting because I can explore options that give clothing more than one life, as well as it being fashionable and fun to find unique clothes." It is also becoming easier than ever to buy second-hand clothes. In addition to independent thrift stores and chains like Goodwill, online thrift stores such as The Real Real, Poshmark and thredUP have emerged to resell and buy used clothing online. For more information about the way these companies are treating both their employees and the planet, tune in to October's Green Film, "The True Cost", a virtual screening on Oct. 13 and 14 at 7 p.m., you can register for the Zoom link on Bronc Nation.

This fall as you shop the latest trends, consider not only the planet but your fellow humans as well. Remember that your wallet is influential, and when you support a business, it is important to recognize what systems and practices you are supporting. We all have the power to start making small changes that could lead to a huge impact.

*Muriel Baki  
Rider University Eco-Rep*



## TRACK AND FIELD

# Track and field hopeful for indoor season

By Shaun Chornobroff

**C**OLLEGE sports are preparing to return to normal, or a new normal to say the least.

College football is back, with even the Big Ten controversially announcing its return to play and plans are being made for the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) to return to all sports in the winter, including indoor track and field.

Rider's men's and women's indoor track teams will be facing several difficulties this upcoming season and Head Coach Bob Hamer knows that this season will be different, if it is played at all.

"I think there's a lot of uncertainty," Hamer said. "I think a lot of the student-athletes and the coaches are very anxious and concerned about the uncertainty. Are we going to have an indoor season? Collectively we think there's going to be an outdoor season, but we want to have an indoor season."

Junior sprinter James Green is expecting a season as he does not see why it would be necessary to cancel.

"It would be ridiculous to not give us a season," Green said. "We are a non-contact sport that could easily continue, although COVID-19 is a concern. Regardless of if we have dual meets, or multiple schools racing spaced out in heats of four rather than eight."

In the past, the team has gone to Ocean Breeze or the Armory to compete with many other schools. Hamer says the team has been to some of the biggest competitions in the country, but that's unlikely this year.

Hamer explains that it is more likely that we see dual or tri-meets with local schools or other MAAC schools.

"We've been working with Monmouth [University], we already had a dual meet scheduled with them on our schedule this year. Coach [Mike] Nelson has been very forthcoming in the idea that he wants to have multiple opportunities to host smaller meets at his facilities," Hamer said.

"Normally during the indoor season we go to meets that will have 20-25 teams, sometimes there are upwards of 50-60 teams at an invitational. That's likely not going to be the case this year, so smaller meets are going to be more of a premium. The bigger challenge is going to be that there aren't as



Photo by Carolo Pascale/The Rider News  
Rider track and field is hopeful for a winter season but is more than confident in a spring season.

many facilities as there are outdoor facilities, so there may be situations where teams may be squeezed out of opportunities because they aren't getting invited or don't have the connections or aren't being given the right opportunities from fellow teams in their areas or conferences." Monmouth University and Manhattan College are the only schools in the MAAC conference with indoor track and field facilities. Hamer also mentioned that the current plan is to still have an indoor championship in March at The Armory in New York. The MAAC indoor track and field championships would have eight men's programs and nine women's programs competing together.

"That's the hope, that we can have the championship we compete in as is, but I know the MAAC is working on alternate scenarios," Hamer said. "I'm sure they're looking for every opportunity to minimize the number of athletes that are in a building at a particular time."

The men's and women's teams usually compete in meets at the same time, though Hamer said the championships may be separated by gender this year.

As the teams and schools prepare, practices look especially different from previous years.

Hamer's practices are now run by events, meaning that sprinters practice with sprinters, hurdlers practice with hurdlers, as is with all of the events the team has. Then it's broken up into subgroups or "pods" of somewhere between two-to-six people and Hamer said

"these are the people they spend all their time with."

Even though there are many changes, it doesn't mean there has been any drop-off in intensity. Practices are more intense now than ever before.

"Practices are like track meets now," Green said. "We are working harder on and off the track. But the crazier part is that the energy and bond is something special. The younger athletes are something to keep an eye on and the returners have a chip on their shoulders. So, practices are no joke."

These practices have the team as a whole focused to a new extent, even if thoughts of a canceled season persist.

"We are working. We are not listening to all the rumors, we've tuned out the distractions and we're locked in. There's no uncertainty whatsoever. We will continue to compete in practice and every opportunity that presents itself. We plan to continue to build and do things better than the years before," Green said.

While track and field have been stuck laying in a bed of uncertainty, men's basketball has been receiving more information on a potential season. Despite his sport often getting overlooked, Hamer is pleased that basketball is back.

"Basketball definitely helps the rest of us be able to do the things that we need to do to provide the resources that we need for our athletes, so we need to figure out a way to complete basketball successfully, but we should also put equal time and resources into figuring out can we contest the other sports as well," Hamer said passionately. "I think we owe that to those athletes. It seems that they figured out what their plan is for basketball which is great and I hope it's successful and I hope they can focus on making sure other sports have those same opportunities."

Hamer added that "the MAAC is working hard for indoor to make sure that we have an indoor track and field championship and a swimming and diving championship."

It's been more than six months since Hamer had to tell his team that the sport they love was being taken away from them. He described it as "a really difficult time." For Green, it created a sense of determination and hunger. A hunger that he and the rest of his team hopes is quenched in January in a dual-meet against Monmouth University.

## COLLEGE BASKETBALL

# College basketball finally gets its start date

By Dylan Manfre

**L**ET the countdown to college basketball begin.

After months of waiting and wondering what the fate of the 2020-2021 basketball season will look like, the NCAA and Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) have provided some clarity on what to expect.

The NCAA announced on Sept. 15 that the first day games can be played is Nov. 25.

As far as the MAAC is concerned, here is what is known from the league's announcement on Sept. 16.

There will be 20 MAAC games — enough for a round-robin — with games beginning on Dec. 8 for the men and Dec. 9 for the women. The week of Feb. 22 is a "blackout week" used for any makeup games should a regular-season game be postponed. No fans (including family members of players) will be in attendance until Dec. 23. The MAAC Tournament will take place Mar. 9 to Mar. 13 in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

"The creation of this scheduling model involved many moving pieces from multiple groups who are dedicated to seeing MAAC student-athletes return to action this season," MAAC Commissioner Rich Ensor said. "I commend everybody involved in the creation process, including the MAAC Council of Presidents, MAAC Committee on Athletic Administration (COAA), MAAC staff and the MAAC Basketball Working Group. Their hard work made this possible. We are ready and committed to providing a safe playing environment for our student-athletes as we navigate the evolving landscape and possible disruptions to the schedule caused by the COVID-19 pandemic."

Ensor acknowledged the possibility of a "bubble" for parts of the season either in Albany, New York, or Atlantic

City, New Jersey. The idea was ultimately shot down due to financial strain and the belief that schools could handle the situations better on their campuses which all reside in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

"We looked at any number of options including bubbles. We had very deep conversations with Albany Convention Center about setting a bubble up in Albany with just the MAAC schools," Ensor told The Rider News. "And a second option would be just us and the American East schools so you'd have another conference in the bubble. We also took a look at the Atlantic City convention center. At the end of the day, it was a fairly expensive enterprise and the schools felt they could better handle nonconference scheduling without utilizing a bubble."

## Nonconference play

Women's basketball head coach Lynn Milligan said the team will play four nonconference games but did not reveal what teams they are against. She added that no opponent requires an overnight stay.

The women's basketball team played nine nonconference games and had a senior-heavy roster last year. Playing the minimum of four games, she is not able to get a full view of the type of team she has to work with.

"It's obviously more challenging this year just based on the limited amount of practice time we have now, and obviously we have a lot of new players on the roster this year," Milligan said in her first in-person interview since March. "It makes it a little more challenging but we know the type of players we have and we know the type of talent we have. We just need to put them all together but we know the pieces are really good."

Men's basketball head coach Kevin Baggett said that the men's basketball team will play five nonconference games. However, the highly-anticipated reunion with former All-MAAC forward and Bronc, Dimencio Vaughn against Ole Miss will likely not be played this season because of travel concerns.

## MAAC Play

The 20 league games represent a traditional round-robin where each team will play everyone twice. There are three days in between each game to allow for testing results to come in.

Ensor, who is on the NCAA Division I women's basketball oversight committee, said the NCAA is expected to release testing guidelines "by mid-October at the earliest." This will determine how many times players need to get tested in a given week and if the NCAA or member institutions will need to bear the cost of securing the tests.

When asked how she feels about the Feb. 22 blackout week, Milligan laughed and said "I hope we're off. I hope we don't have any games."

"That means things are going good. I think it's a good idea. I think inevitably there's going to be some games in the conference that won't happen. So I think it's smart to have that extra week because everyone wants to get their 20 conference games in to go into Atlantic City. Everybody with the same amount of playing opportunities."

The MAAC announced the conference schedule on Sept. 22. The women's basketball team will host Manhattan on Dec. 9 and the men's basketball team will host rival Siena on Dec. 8.



## ATHLETICS

# Teams hold practices with seasons on pause



Photo by Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

Sophomore middle hitter **Morgan Koch** goes up for a ball during a practice on Sept. 18.

By **Dylan Manfre**

The week of Sept. 14 was important in the NCAA's guidelines for resocializing college sports.

Practices and training sessions are now bound by strict protocols limiting the number of players in the gym at a time, among other things, to ensure the safety of student-athletes, coaches and trainers to make the most of the fall and winter seasons.

### The defending MAAC champions

For the women's basketball team, players walk in using the front entrance of Alumni Gym and head to the locker room where only four are allowed in at a time. Players use hand sanitizer when they take a break and exit the building through a door next to the locker room.

As of Sept. 14, coaches could be involved in running the practices as opposed to "monitoring" from the sidelines. Before that date, the women's basketball players had to reserve a time slot for a 30-minute voluntary shooting session which consisted of two players on each end of the court.

As for basketball, the programs now have three players in a "pod" and are working out for an hour on the court doing drills.

"Right now we're kind of getting that practice feel again so it feels honestly amazing to just be around my teammates and coaches and get criticism, it feels great," sophomore guard Sophia DeMauro said. "Before that, it was just individual workouts, like we were just working on our own skills and trying to get better individually. Now we're just putting it all together in our small group workouts. So we're one step closer."

DeMauro is in a group with fellow sophomores Lauren Saa and Victoria Toomey and said they are focusing on transition drills and defense among other things.

Sofie "Soof" Bruintjes came to Rider from the Netherlands. Unlike her teammates in the U.S., Bruintjes was participating in live 5-on-5 competitions with her team Orange Lions Academy, until two weeks before she left for New Jersey. She does not mind the restrictions that the NCAA is placing.

"The protocols over here are way stricter than they are back home ... the protocols here they are keeping us safe for sure," Bruintjes said. "It's really strict but it's good and everybody is following. Like on our team everybody is keeping the protocols so that's nice too."

The NCAA announced on Sept. 16 that the first date of competition is Nov. 25, giving teams 63 days to prepare.

Milligan said that while the team is not practicing at 100% intensity yet, the team is trying to fit a lot into an eight-hour practice week. Per NCAA regulations, practice increases to 12 hours a week beginning Sept. 21 and full official practices can begin on Oct. 14.

"Yeah, we're trying to squeeze a lot in," Milligan said. "Coach [Maritta Gilcrease] and Coach Steve [Harney] are running. So it's been challenging. We're on the court four hours a day so it's challenging but it's been five months since we've been on the court so we'll be on the floor eight hours a day if that's what it takes. So whatever we're allowed to do with our kids and make sure they're learning and getting their bodies back to the speed it needs to be at for the long grind of the season is probably the challenging part."

Even after practice time increased to 12 hours a week, Milligan said her team is not ready to take that yet.

"We won't use 12 [hours] yet," Milligan said. "It's not necessary for us yet. We're kind of easing our way into things. We will get to that point sooner than later but we're not doing that right now."

### Volleyball's regrouping

Unlike the women's basketball team, volleyball does not have a start date for its season since the fall sports have been moved to the spring because of the pandemic.

"We keep reminding them our test isn't until four or five months away," head coach Jeff Rotondo said. "So right now we're just studying and preparing and getting a little bit better and drilling in technique a lot."

Players walk into the gym with masks on and get ready for practice near the away basketball locker room.

The volleyball team currently does not have access to its locker room, according to Rotondo.

On Sept. 18, players began warming up by throwing tennis balls over the net simulating what a spike would look like. They can only take their mask off when they set foot on the court.

"Basically what we're looking to do is a lot of technique work," Rotondo said. "The focuses are, depending on the position, one or two things per practice. We're going probably like a rep in or two reps in every 30 to 45 seconds to keep an eye on capacity and make sure we're not overtraining. And then from there, it's really just drilling in technique."

Sophomore middle hitter Morgan Koch said she is happy to be back playing because in her home in Illinois, all gyms were still shut down.

"I was so excited. Even when I found out that the gym, the [Student Recreation Center], we're able to workout outside I was so excited. I would have taken anything at that point just because all the gyms are closed and I'm just so happy to be back with my team."



# Sports

ONLINE

## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

*Men's basketball Head Coach Kevin Baggett talks Black Lives Matter in video interview.*

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## MEN'S BASKETBALL

## Injured freshman McKeithan is a budding star

By Shaun Chornobroff and Luke Lombardi

In the midst of a rebuild and with only one returning upperclassmen, Rider men's basketball is in dire need of leadership. Little did anybody expect that leadership would come from a freshman who will be unable to play this upcoming season.

Corey McKeithan is a freshman point guard and someone who men's basketball Head Coach Kevin Baggett expected to play a significant role in the team this year. But, unfortunately, he tore his anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in the beginning of August and will be forced to redshirt this season.

McKeithan has made the best of a bad situation and established himself as a leader, despite not being able to touch the court.

"He's already outspoken in the right way. He doesn't mind saying the right things, when guys are struggling he doesn't mind rallying guys in, saying 'hey come on we got to get through this' as a head coach you always lean on your point guard," Baggett said. "In basketball terminology I call them our quarterbacks because they are an extension of the head coach. You need them thinking with the same mindset that I have and leading with the same mindset that I have and Corey was no different."

McKeithan's leadership abilities are evident to those who have known him, especially during his high school days at Windsor High School in Connecticut.

"We promote seniors to be leaders in our program," McKeithan's high school coach Ken Smith said. "Corey was one of the best we had on and off the court."

Smith said McKeithan is a "great young man who believed in the Windsor program and represented it well, as a player he was top five, one of the best who has ever played for us, and he comes from a very supportive family. He is a great kid who will be an asset to the Rider basketball program and community."

While this injury could be a death sentence for a number of college freshman, Baggett believes this may aid him in the long run.

"I don't think it's a setback, I'll tell you what he was down early on, but right away he turned his attention to saying I'm going to come back bigger, faster, stronger, I'm going to study the game more, I'm going to be a coach on the sideline," Baggett said. "He's a guy who's glass is half-full, not half-empty, he just has a great outlook about everything and our trainers raved about him because he's always on time, he's always reaching out, he's very appreciative of everything, he's thanked her for her persistence with him and trying to get him back healthy already from the day after his surgery. He's a guy that I don't ever question that he's going to work at it on and off the court ... So you appreciate those guys because they come few and far between."

"It kind of reminds me of when Dimencio Vaughn tore his ACL. That year he sat out, I was really worried about the fact that he was missing the on-the-court work, but actually he learned a lot and ended up being first-team all conference that next year when he was back healthy. I could hands down see Corey being on the rookie team, if not being the best or one of the best rookies in the league the following year."

McKeithan's reputation doesn't come without recognition. The 6-foot-1 point guard was a three time all-state selection and was all-conference all four years he spent at Windsor.

McKeithan was a guaranteed bucket at Windsor and had an on-court aura that stood out to opponents.

"He was always known as one of the toughest players to guard because he was so versatile. You always had to account for him at all times during games" said Luke McGarrity, who played against McKeithan multiple times during his high school career.

Stories about McKeithan's in-game exploits can be told by many people. Smith said "When he was a freshman he was in a preseason game and had a chance to beat a rival program with a game winner, he missed and the rest of his years he became known for



Photo courtesy of Corey McKeithan

Rider men's basketball freshman guard **Corey McKeithan** could be a breakout star for the Broncos in 2021.

making game winners."

Baggett recalls watching McKeithan play in an Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) game and his toughness making an impression on him.

"I watched him last summer, he got hit in the head, bloody nose, bloody lip and I thought he had a concussion, but he went right back out there and continued to play. That's when I knew he was tough and he has something pretty special about him."

McKeithan's toughness also goes hand in hand with his skill, but also his work ethic and motivation. Smith said his work ethic was something that made him so good, which is a sentiment Baggett agrees with, as he raves about McKeithan's work ethic and his motivation.

McKeithan's motivation, the thing that has pushed him to be so great since his love affair with basketball started at three-years-old is his family. His father, who brought him the game of basketball and helped develop him, his 14-year-old brother, who McKeithan is trying to motivate and be a role model for and his mother, who McKeithan dedicated his forearm to, are all sources of motivation.

"I have a tattoo on my forearm," McKeithan explained. "It's a dove with my mom's name on the forearm and a rose. The dove is for peace ... and the rose is for love."

McKeithan has two other tattoos, both representing family.

"I got a family tattoo, it's a heart with a heartbeat, my mom has it and my father got it. I have a tattoo on my inner bicep and it says 'you never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you have' and it has a cancer sign. The cancer sign isn't really for any type of cancer. My aunt had passed away from ovarian cancer and my grandma was a survivor of breast cancer, so that tattoo means a lot to me."

McKeithan's character and leadership qualities has Baggett excited for what he will bring to the program over the next five years and believes he's a star in the making.

"We've been fortunate of late to have guys like Stevie [Jordan], Teddy Okerefor. We've had some really good point guards of late and he's going to be another one that's going to have a great career here for us when it's all set and done," Baggett said.